enactments on the subject in British India. The Regulation should provide for the gradual withdrawal of the Government control in the administration of all municipal institutions, reserving to the Government the right to act as they deemed fit in certain important and specified cases. As regards the constitution of the Committee, provision should be made for the gradual extension of the principle of election of all members of the Committee including its President. As a first step in that direction, the question of the nomination of non-official Presidents, wherever possible, should be taken in hand without delay. As regards the administration, he pleaded that, as far as possible, it should be entirely left in the hands of the Committee. The President as the executive head of the Committee should be subject to the direction and control of the Committee in all matters. He also proposed the extension of the scope and functions of the Committee and urged on the Government the necessity of rendering all municipal institutions full and ample financial assistance in carrying on their work. It was no use to create municipal institutions and ask them to find the wherewithal if they wanted more of the things of the world than they could afford and there was no justification for such an attitude in Travancore.

In order to extend the field of local self-government, he suggested the formation of District and Taluk Boards and the creation of Village Panchayats. Sanitation, elementary education and minor public works including minor irrigation might be advantageously left to the control of those bodies. A certain portion of the forests now reserved should be set apart for the use and under the control of the adjoining villagers. That would remove many of the grievances yearly brought to the notice of the Government in the Assembly. The District Boards might be made the controlling authorities of all those bodies and might be empowered to deal with major P. W. D. works up to a certain limit and they should also be made an advisory body as regards all major P. W. D. works in their districts. In constituting the local bodies and financing them, the same liberal spirit as that to be pursued in the case of the municipalities should be followed. Additional taxation would be necessary in case those bodies were established; but it would be borne cheerfully by the people, provided they saw that the Goverment were also willing to come to their help with a willing heart and an open hand. As regards the Village Panchayats to be established in accordance with Regulation I of 1090, the Member said that, if those Panchayats were to serve the objects for the realisation of which they were to be created, great care should be bestowed on the character and position of those selected to discharge the functions of those courts. Education, wealth, character and status should all be given their due weight, but the one factor that should weigh most in the selection of a candidate was his character. Unless that was always borne in mind by the official on whom the responsibility of choosing the Judges of those Panchayats practically lay, the institution of those courts was not likely to end in any good results, and the Member hoped that the Government would, on that account, bestow their careful attention on the matter.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

97. Reorganisation of the older Town Improvement Committees by appointing non-official Presidents and enlarging their powers.

Mr. C. Sankara Menon B. A., B. L. (Member, T. I. C., Quilon) said that, since the Government had decided to amend the Towns Conservancy and Improvement Regulation and as the Quilon Committee had already given their views as to the lines on which the powers of the Committee should be enlarged, he would not re-iterate those views at the Assembly. He would, however, emphasise one or two points. Though the Government had recognised the principle or policy of appointing non-official Presidents to the Committees, they were, he regretted to observe, rather slow and even reluctant to put the policy into practice. The Government had given the assurance that the experiment made at Alleppey was, at any rate, not a failure. If the object of creating the Committees was to instruct and encourage the people in the art of self-government, he failed to see how that end could be achieved without entrusting certain responsibilities to the Committees. In Cochin and in British Malabar, the experiment was no failure. In Cochin, the Committees were but four years old, and

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

yet, in the very first year, non-official Presidents were appointed in three of them, and those Committees were doing very useful work. He therefore strongly urged on the Government to allow non-official Presidents at least to the Committees in the five older towns and also to confer on the Committees themselves the privilege of electing their Presidents. An amendment to secure the above object should, he said, be made in the Regulation.

He next said that the work of the Committees was considerably handicapped by the interference of the Government in the Committee's affairs. Even in 1089 there were several instances of such interference, and speaking of the town of Quilon, he said that the Committee was placed in an awkward predicament by the action of the Government in not sanctioning additional funds applied for by the Committee for paying the scavengers already entertained by them. The older Committees had been in existence for 22 years and if the Committees were not yet considered fit to be raised from their condition of pupilage, he did not know when they would be trusted to manage their own affairs. In the matter of sanitation, the powers of the Committees were very limited. The control of the roads could also with advantage be transferred to the Committees.

Dewan.—The question relating to the control of roads is under the considera tion of the Government.

The Member said that the Committees had also no sort of control over bakeries, hotels &c. In fact, the administration of the Committees was at present confined to supervising the sweeping and lighting of the streets and private scavenging. That, he ventured to say, was certainly no municipal administration, and if the powers of Committees could not possibly be enlarged, the non-official members would be glad to be out of the Committee.

In conclusion, the Member requested that the Regulation should be modified so as to include within it all the provisions of the British Municipalities Act and the powers vested in the Municipal Council by that Act should be conferred on the Committees. He assured the Government that it was time that such a change was made in the Regulation.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

98. Certain suggestions for the better working of the Town Improvement Committees.

Mr. M. D. Daniel (Member, Nominated) made the following suggestions for the better working of the Town Improvement Committees :—

(1) The number of the non-official Members in the Nagercoil Committee should be increased to 12, and a similar increase in the strength of members and in the number of blocks made in the other towns also.

(2) The attendance of members should be enforced.

(3) The proceedings of the Committee should be conducted in the Vernacular and the proceedings of the Committee in English and in the Vernacular should appear in the same issue of the Gazette.

(4) The time of meeting of the Committee should be so fixed as to suit the convenience of the majority of the members.

(5) The office of the Committee and the Committee meetings should be held in one and the same building situated in a central place in the town.

(6) The materials required for the Committee should be obtained by the open tender system and the work to be done should also be executed by the same system. The members must have ample freedom to interpellate the President on financial and other concerns of the Committee.

(7) A local conference of the members of the several T. I. C.'s in a Division and a general conference of the representatives of all the T. I. C.'s in the State, prefer-

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly